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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TASHKENT 002064

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SUBJECT: GOU INTERNAL SECURITY CAPABILITIES AND PLANNING

REF: A. C-RE7-02026

[1](#)B. IIR 6 939 0003 08

Classified By: DATT Jeff Hartman and Poloff Steven Prohaska for reasons
1.4 (b, d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Uzbekistan's vast internal security apparatus would play a critical role in any GOU efforts to deter or respond to civil disturbances. Security forces have trained to improve interoperability and to overcome potential breakdowns in command and control since 2005. We are not aware of any serious problems with morale or loyalty within these forces, as they are well-paid and instances of "dedovschina" (hazing) and desertion are rare. Multiple, large-scale protests would seriously tax the ability of security forces to respond due to limitations in their air transit capabilities. If the GOU perceived impending unrest, it could pursue measures including dipping into its reserves to alleviate socio-economic grievances and redeploying security forces to areas where the GOU perceives a threat. End summary.

Question 1:

[1](#)2. (C) What organization would respond, and who would be in charge, if large protests developed in Uzbekistan? To whom are these troops generally loyal (i.e. first-line management/leadership, troop commanders, head of service, President)? If there was a breakdown in command and control, where would it likely develop?

[1](#)3. (C) If large-scale protests took place in Uzbekistan, the provincial military district command--which reports to the National Military Command of the Ministry of Defense (MOD)--would be the top level of command. Subordinate to this would be provincial NSS, provincial MVD, local NSS, and local MVD personnel.

[1](#)4. (C) Military district command units would be responsible for isolating protests and would receive reinforcements. The NSS would have tactical control and would be supported by the military district command. If necessary, the NSS also would supervise MOD, MVD, and Ministry of Emergency Situations (MChS) units. Uzbek security forces have taken part in simulations, table-top exercises, and some small-scale field exercises to overcome potential breakdowns in command and control. Security forces use the MOD Special Modeling and Simulation Center to test potential scenarios once or twice a

year.

Question 2:

¶5. (C) What is the current disposition and size of the special forces units of the MVD, NSS, and MOD?

¶6. (C) Every city and province in Uzbekistan has at least one MVD special forces unit that is normally company-sized (100-120 personnel). Several of these units are located in Tashkent. The Ministry of Defense has at least five special forces battalions (300-450 personnel in each), and these work interoperably with or under the MVD and NSS. Airborne brigades are located in Ferghana and Chirchik, and Jizzakh has one mountain brigade (roughly 1,200 personnel).

Question 3:

¶7. (C) Which special forces units are considered the most capable in countering large protests? Which units are likely to be called on first to respond to large protests?

¶8. (C) The special forces unit at Bakmal in Jizzakh province probably would be the MOD's first response unit to large-scale protests. This unit has received higher-quality equipment than other units, which includes night vision devices, rifle-mounted night sights, helmets with in-helmet radio sets, and modern body armor. The unit has also completed a much greater number of rotations to the MOD's Special Modeling and Simulation Center than other units have, and it has the most practice in NSS interoperability. It is unclear what other units would be most likely to be called on first to respond to large protests.

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Question 4:

¶9. (C) What, if any, indications have there been that special forces units would be reticent to carry out orders to shoot against a crowd of protesters, such as occurred in Andijon in May 2005? Are there any units considered more loyal to President Karimov than others? Any units whose loyalty is questioned by Uzbekistani leadership?

¶10. (C) We are not aware of loyalty problems within the Uzbek security forces, as they are relatively well-paid, incidents of "dedovschina" (hazing) are rare, and there are very few desertions (reftel). The Armed Forces saturate their troops with pro-government propaganda to reinforce patriotism, improve teamwork, and overcome potential loyalty problems. The Armed Forces also ensure that trainees, officers, and foreign military visitors know that many protesters at Andijon in May 2005 were armed and fired on Uzbek security forces. Nevertheless, the officer corps views its response at Andijon as panicky and tragically brutal. Special forces units would be far more likely to open fire on hostile, armed people if ordered than on peaceful demonstrators. (Comment: An unidentified number of people in the anti-government movement at Andijon in May 2005 were armed and shot at security forces, as verified by independent observers. Six MOD troops were killed at Andijon, and the MVD, Border Guards, and NSS all suffered casualties. In addition to the organized armed opposition group present at Andijon, there were unarmed local civilians who gathered at the square both out of curiosity and to demonstrate against the GOU, who suffered an unknown number of fatalities and injuries in the firing. End comment.)

Question 5:

¶11. (C) What, if any, indications have there been that the leadership of the MVD, MOD, or NSS would hesitate to carry out orders to use lethal methods to crack down on large protests?

¶12. (C) The MOD has undertaken reforms aimed at ensuring a controlled response to counter civil disturbances. Since 2005, MOD units have pursued escalation of force, law of land warfare, and rules of engagement training with the German Armed Forces and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The former Commander of the Eastern Military District was sacked for his command's reaction and at least two of the special forces commanders at Andijon were arrested, tried, and convicted for dereliction of duty--failing to follow protocols and hence allowing the situation to spiral out of control. (Comment: It is unclear whether any of these were tried for improper use of force or, indeed, whether the GOU believes after its investigation that the totality of circumstances warranted prosecution. End comment.) The GOU plans to have MOD units isolate protest areas so that MVD or NSS units--which are better-suited for internal security missions--can deal with protesters inside the cordon. While we believe the GOU would attempt a controlled response to civil disturbances consistent with recent training, if these measures failed, it probably would resort to whatever means it felt necessary to deal with an armed uprising.

Question 6:

¶13. (C) What is the capacity of Uzbekistani security forces to respond to multiple, large-scale (100) protests in different areas of the country?

¶14. (C) The GOU remains very concerned about the potential for multiple, large-scale protests. To respond to unrest in the Ferghana Valley, MOD special forces units--most of which are located along the border with Tajikistan in Jizzakh, Samarkand, and Surkhandarya--would have to move through the Kamchik Pass, which Border Guard units control. Units from the MOD, MChS, and MVD periodically conduct operational rotations into the pass, where they are subordinated to the Border Guards. The GOU does not have the ability to move entire battalions by rotary-wing air to a trouble spot because it lacks the lift capacity, maintenance capability, logistics base, and operational experience for this.

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Moreover, they do not have the fixed-wing capability for these operations because they lack a sufficient number of airfields with the apron space for moving and off-loading units. Due to GOU concerns about inadequate security of the Kamchik Pass, which is the gateway to the Ferghana Valley, the GOU has implemented Border Guard reforms. After 2005, the Border Guards were subordinated to the NSS after its perceived failure to report movement into Andijon from Kyrgyzstan and its failure to adequately secure the border areas during and after the incidents. The GOU wants the Border Guards to firmly control transit through this pass to prevent potential reinforcement to an insurrection by outside forces in the Ferghana Valley and to prevent participants in an insurrection from escaping the country.

Comment:

¶15. (C) Obtaining hard, detailed information on specific plans of security forces to respond to civil disturbances is extremely difficult, but if civil disturbances were to occur, Uzbekistan's security apparatus would be critical to any GOU response. Moving security forces to perceived problematic areas or conducting "show-of-force" exercises also could help to deter potential unrest. The GOU also could resort to economic means as a deterrent. If the GOU believed there was a serious threat of unrest associated with rising prices of bread, for example, it could conceivably dip into its \$2.3 billion reserves to alleviate socio-economic grievances. The GOU would find it difficult, however, to use economic resources to resolve imminent internal security issues. The GOU has not used its reserves this year. While the prices of basic commodities have been surging since August of this year, we are aware of only a few small protests that have

taken place in the regions, including Karakalpakstan and
Ferghana, in recent months.
HANSON